

State employees win contracts to manage state's three Department of Correction re-entry centers

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"Competition works, and we save taxpayers money whether public or private sector Hoosiers win the competition. But it's especially good news when state employees find ways to economize and earn the business"

Governor Mitch Daniels



Governor Mitchell E. Daniels fields questions at South Bend Community Re-Entry.

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SOUTH BEND, Indiana (February 20, 2007) - Governor Mitch Daniels announced today that state employee groups in South Bend and Indianapolis submitted the winning bids to administer services at the state's three Department of Correction community re-entry centers. The state will save nearly \$750,000 annually and increase employment opportunities and services for offenders at the three facilities, one in South Bend and two in Indianapolis.

"Competition works, and we save taxpayers money whether public or private sector Hoosiers win the competition. But it's especially good news when state employees find ways to economize and earn the business," said Daniels.

This isn't the first time state employees have won a contract for services. In 2005, 77 nutritional service employees at Logansport State Hospital successfully bid to win the food service contract. That contract saves the state about \$1 million annually.

The governor has directed that when employees choose to compete in a Request for Proposals process that they receive administrative support, which was provided by the Office of Management and Budget.

The three centers - South Bend Re-entry Community Center, Indianapolis Men's Work Release and Indianapolis Women's Work release - serve 344 offenders. There are 21 employees in South Bend, 31 at the men's facility Indianapolis, and 26 at the Indianapolis women's facility.

In January 2005, the average per diem for the three centers was \$114 per day. The South Bend employees bid \$33 per day or \$245,000 less than the current annual operating budget. The Indianapolis Center employees bid a per diem amount of \$35.01 per day or \$490,000 less than current annual operations.

The employees reduced costs in their proposal by suggesting a streamlined process to purchase supplies, using existing resources for services such as substance abuse treatment, and increasing bed capacity to use space more efficiently.

Three other companies competed for the contracts, which will be for a term of four years. Services include adult education through college courses in the community, social programming through faith-based communities and treatment service providers. In South Bend, for example, there are 24 entities that employ or have employed former offenders.

"I am very excited that state employees were able to show an exceptional value compared to private businesses by offering an effective and efficient use of tax dollars to run this new business model," said Department of Correction Commissioner J. David Donahue.

The worker re-entry centers prepare offenders for the transition back to their communities. Specifically, the centers focus on three vital phases of a successful re-entry plan before release: employment, housing and transportation. Opportunities include jobs in warehouses, construction, telemarketing and food services. Local resources include educational opportunities, faith-based groups and partnerships with local businesses and non-profit organizations.

"By establishing ties within communities for offenders, prior to release, we are paving the path to successful re-entry," said Greg Cress, superintendent of the South Bend Community Re-entry Center. "The award of this contract is a great win for state employees. We have worked very hard to provide

offenders with the resources needed for integration."

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The Department employs over 8,000 employees and houses 24,000 adult and juveniles in 32 facilities, ranging from minimum to maximum custody, prison camps, juvenile facilities and work release centers. The Department's home page on the Internet can be found at: <http://www.in.gov/indcorrection>. The Department's Re-entry Site can be found: <http://www.reentry.in.gov>.